

STYLE

Why you can't always trust pet food ingredient labels

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TODAY

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When you buy food for your pets, you trust that what's on the label will be in the package. But that's not always the case, according to tests done at Chapman University in Orange, California.



dogboxstudio / Today

Researchers in Chapman's Food Science Program bought commercial products for dogs and cats (both wet and dry food) and used DNA analysis to determine the types of meat they contained.

Almost 40 percent of the products had a meat that was not listed on the label. Of the 52 samples, 31

were labeled correctly, 20 were potentially mislabeled and one had a meat ingredient that could not be identified.

Assistant professor Rosalee Hellberg, co-author of the study, told TODAY that both dog and cat food samples were mislabeled, and that wet food was more likely than dry to have the problem.

“We found a lot of undeclared pork in certain products,” Hellberg said. “We found some products that would claim to have beef, even as a number one ingredient, and there was no beef in the product at all.”

The researchers said it’s impossible to know if the mislabeling was accidental or intentional, and that there was no way to know where it took place — at the supplier level or at manufacturing plants.

“It is a form of economic fraud,” Hellberg said, and when you consider that Americans are expected to spend more than \$22 billion on pet food this year, according to the [American Pet Products Association](#), the economic harm could be substantial.

Hellberg told TODAY she was surprised by the high rate of mislabeling. The reason she decided to test pet-food products was to see if they contained any horse meat, which would be a concern to some people. None did.

[The Chapman report](#) did not include a list of the products tested or those that were found to be potentially mislabeled. Hellberg told us the study was done to investigate the industry as a whole rather than single out any pet food brands.

“We are hoping to raise awareness of the issue which would result in increased scrutiny to make sure pet foods really contain what they claim to contain,” she said.

The [Pet Food Institute](#) (PFI), an industry trade group, told TODAY it’s still trying to learn more about the Chapman study. In an email, Kurt Gallagher, PFI’s director of communications, pointed out that the majority of products sampled were labeled properly.

“Pet food is one of the most highly regulated food products,” Gallagher wrote. “Responsible pet food companies collaborate with FDA and [AAFCO](#) (Association of American Feed Control Officials) and work hard to ensure their products are in compliance with federal and state regulations, which include rules for proper labeling.”

Who’s minding the store?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates the product labeling of both people and pet food. Hellberg told us the FDA was aware of the study. We contacted the FDA and were provided with a statement, which reads in part:

“Consumers should be able to trust that what is on the label is in the product. Pet foods do not require the FDA’s approval before being marketed; however, all ingredients are required to be listed on the label using their common or usual name. The FDA has taken action in the past when ingredients are not properly listed on the label or when one ingredient is substituted for another ingredient.”

Not the first time

Back in 2012, ELISA Technologies tested 21 commercial dog food products and found 12 instances of mislabeling (two products had more than one labeling issue.) As reported in [PetFoodIndustry.com](#), eight of the products had animal protein not listed on the ingredient label. Two labeled as gluten- or grain-free, tested positive for gluten.

“As in the human food industry, this type of mislabeling is typically not intentional on the part of the manufacturer,” [Dr. Laura K. Allred wrote](#) on [PetFoodIndustry.com](#). “Rather, it is most often the result of mistakes during formulation or the receipt of mislabeled product from a supplier.”

Potential health consequences

In the Chapman study, about a third of the samples (16 of the 52) had a meat ingredient not listed on the label — most often pork, which is a common food allergen for pets.

“This does not shed a very good light on the pet food industry,” said Dr. Joseph Wakshlag, an associate professor of clinical nutrition at Cornell University’s [College of Veterinary Medicine](#).

Professor Wakshlag told TODAY that just a small amount of pig liver added to the product — and not disclosed on the label — would be more than enough to cause a problem for an allergic dog or cat.

If you have a pet with a food allergy, talk to your vet to make sure you’re using a food that’s appropriate and safe.

Herb Weisbaum is The ConsumerMan. Follow him on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) or visit [The ConsumerMan website](#).

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STYLE

Bye-bye, bikinis! How 1 brand is making swimsuits you can move in



Rachel Greenberg
TODAY

an hour ago

Oh, to be a kid again in the summer — splashing around the pool, practicing cartwheels on the sand, riding bikes by the boardwalk without a care in the world. When you grow up, it can sometimes feel like those once-active summer days are long gone.

But one swimwear brand is setting out to change that. Summersalt is designed with movement in mind, or as founders Lori Coulter and Reshma Chamberlin and like to say, “for women who live life beyond the lounge chair.”

“More often than not, we’re chasing after our kids or actually swimming in the ocean,” said Coulter.

During these real-life moments, an itty-bitsy bikini just won't cut it, so Summersalt has created comfortable, quality suits that retain their shape and hold up over time.

Here's everything you need to know:

Fit and fabric



Summersalt

First and foremost, Summersalt's swimsuits are designed for real women — and the more active, the better. “Our consumer is engaging in life,” said Coulter. “We see swimwear as an avenue for adventure and it's about being appropriate for whatever activity you're participating in.”

Summersalt's fabric is five times stronger and boasts four times more compression than that of an average suit. This extra compression helps maintain the fit of the garment, so that suits can stand up to salt, heat, chlorine and other elements without becoming stretched or ruined. As if that weren't enough, they're made out of recycled material and offer **UPF 50+ protection**.

The suits are tested on Olympians for ultimate wearability, and are free of hardware to ensure comfort. But they're not meant solely for athletes, and they're more than just simple rash guards. “We're bridging the gap between the Speedos of the world and **Victoria's Secret or other sexy, fashion suits**,” said Coulter.



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Lines and color blocking in the designs are strategically placed to flatter, and styles run the gamut from asymmetrical one-pieces to high-neck, cutout tops and mesh briefs. The result is a sophisticated athlesuire look that is effortless yet stylish.

Purchasing



Summersalt

In order to keep prices lower than other designer-quality swimwear (everything is under \$100, with one-pieces priced at \$95, bottoms at \$45 and tops at \$50), the suits are available exclusively on the brand's website, gosummersalt.com. This direct-to-consumer format means a quality product at a great price, and it also makes it easier for Summersalt to gain consumer feedback.

"We want to build a brand where we have open communication from our consumer," said Chamberlin. "Our plan is to be agile about the learning process while also staying true to the brand."

Though there's only one option for *where* to shop, Chamberlin and Coulter want consumers to have choices about *how* they shop. **Women can buy and return immediately**, like they would on any e-commerce site, or they can opt for a try on pack, choosing six mix-and-match pieces to try on at home, and paying only for what they keep. The rest can be returned with no risk (just a \$15 shipping and handling fee).

Summersalt will continue to debut limited-edition pieces throughout the summer, with possible collaborations and a plan for weekly style launches in the works. "Our goal is to offer a breadth of product that allows women to find what they're looking for," said Chamberlin. "We're excited to bring swimwear to the market in a completely different light."

*Summersalt*

You can shop over 100 different swimwear styles at gosummersalt.com. And for more suits under \$100, check out these picks below.

6 Shore Road by Pooja Bikini Top, \$40, and Bottom, \$37, [Shopbop](#)



Shopbop

Xhilaration Women's Plus Size Bikini Top, \$17 and Bottom, \$17, **Target**



Target

One Piece Striped Swimsuit, \$98, **Free People**



Free People

Swimsuit with Lacing, \$34, **H&M**



H&M

City Chic Stripe Swimsuit, \$89, **ASOS**



ASOS

Ruffled One Shoulder Swimsuit, \$20, **Old Navy**



Old Navy

Deep V-Neck French Bikini Top, \$45, and Bottom, \$35, **J. Crew**



J.Crew

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